

Message Text

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00678 201231Z

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 201215Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8825

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT POUCH

S E C R E T KUWAIT 0678

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR MU MASS

SUBJ: RESPONSE TO OMANI REQUESTS

REF: KUWAIT 0665

1. REFTEL REPORTED MY TALK WITH SULTAN QABUS ON AIR DEFENSE FOR OMAN. FOLLOWING COMMENT IS INTENDED FURTHER CLARIFY WHERE I THINK WE ARE NOW ON THIS SUBJECT.

2. WE DID NOT NEED TO SPECIFICALLY TURN SULTAN DOWN ON REQUEST FOR AIR DEFENSE SURVEY BECAUSE SULTAN (WITH HIS ADVISORS WHICH OF COURSE LARGELY BRITISH) SEEMS ALREADY TO HAVE LAUNCHED HIS OWN SURVEY (PARAS 3-5 REFTEL). HE HAS IN FACT ALREADY MADE UP HIS MIND TO ACQUIRE SOME AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY (RELATIVELY MODEST IN SIZE SO FAR).

3. DESPITE THEIR PROTESTATIONS TO US PREVIOUSLY THAT THEY HAVE DISCOURAGED SULTAN ON AIR DEFENSE, FACT IS BRITISH HAVE SHOWN KEEN WILLINGNESS TO SELL SULTAN SOME BRITISH AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT, AND BRITISH AMB HAWLEY WAS PERFECTLY FRANK IN TELLING ME SO (PARA 2). SULTAN SEEMS INCLINED GO ALONG WITH BRITISH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAM AND RADAR (PARA 5). INCIDENTALLY, SULTAN SHOWED ME LITTLE OF THE DISSATISFACTION WITH BRITISH THAT SHAKIR SEEMS TO HAVE EMPHASIZED IN DEPT.

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4. MOST IMPORTANT ITEM IN AIR DEFENSE IN SULTAN'S MIND, AND ON WHICH HE CLEARLY IS STILL UNDECIDED, IS FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. I THINK HIS MIND REALLY IS OPEN AS TO WHICH COUNTRY -- US, FRENCH OR BRITISH -- PRODUCES THE BEST PLANE FOR HIS NEEDS. I BELIEVE WE

CAN EXPECT SULTAN TO REQUEST INFO ON OUR AIRCRAFT AND QUITE LIKELY
TO ASK IF HE CAN SEND TEAM TO SEE THEM DEMONSTRATED. I STRONGLY
RECOMMEND THAT IF HE DOES SO, WE DO NOT RPT NOT TURN HIM DOWN.
IF WE WANT TO DISCOURAGE HIM, WE CAN IN OUR BRIEFINGS EMPHASIZE
DISADVANTAGES, POINT OUT WE UNABLE PROVIDE US PERSONNEL TO MAINTAIN
THEM, ETC. BUT IT WOULD NOT BE MEASURE OF A TRUE FRIEND TO REFUSE
EVEN DISCUSS PROS AND CONS OF WHAT HE BELIEVES IS ONE OF HIS
OPTIONS. MOREOVER, AS I POINTED OUT IN PARA 10, I WONDER IF WE
REALLY WANT TO SHUT OFF ALL POSSIBILITY OF OMANI ACQUISITION OF
ANY PARTICULAR US PIECE OF EQUIPMENT OR WEAPONS SYSTEM UNTIL WE
KNOW WHAT SAUDI CONDITIONS FOR AIDING OMAN MIGHT INCLUDE. IF
THEY INSIST THAT THEIR MONEY BE SPENT ON NON-BRITISH EQUIPMENT,
WE MIGHT FIND BOTH OMANIS AND SAUDIS COMING TO US TO BUY EVEN
SOME BIG ITEMS. WOULD WE WANT TO REFUSE THEM IN THAT CASE?
STOLTZFUS

SECRET

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